Since its inception, Compton Center Theatre Department has received many awards and has hosted the American premiere of Samuel Becket’s Waiting for Godot. Many former students are working in the industry, contributing to successful films and television shows.

Students in the Compton Center Theatre Department have participated in the staging of more than 200 productions including: Goin’ a Buffalo, Purlie Victorious, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Steambath, Lover’s and Other Strangers, A Raisin in the Sun, The Colored Museum, The African Company Presents Richard III, The Good Woman of Setzuan, Harriet Tubman visits a Therapist and Two Trains Running.

The Theatre department has presented original works from our community: No Crystal Stairs, Poems in the Night, Women in the Dancing Place, The Question, Beneath the Eyes of God and Manhood, among others. Student productions have included The Gathering, I and II, Gender Citi, I and II and Womanhood.

For information about the THEATRE ARTS PROGRAM call 310-900-1600, ext. 2962 or 2965
The El Camino College Compton Center Theatre Department offers a comprehensive foundation in the theory, history and practice of theater to students seeking a degree, a certificate, courses for theatrical training and experience or are planning to transfer to a four-year college or university.

The program focuses on coursework and production by exploring theater in the context of history, psychology, ethics and morality, physical movement, spatial relationships and concepts of balance. It encompasses reality-based acting, directing, design and stagecraft.

Students will study theories of aesthetics and critical, literary and theatrical approaches; application and training of the personal self as an open, expressive, and available instrument; and communication in private, group and audience modes.

For more than thirty-seven years, the program has produced hundreds of productions representing every genre and style of drama.

The program covers the discipline in theoretical, practical, and representational modes – always with a commitment to the absolute honesty and integrity that theater demands at every level. Students learn within the context of reality-based theater, where nothing is contrived and truth is the standard. A sense of community is fostered in the theater classroom and in each production.

A resident “repertory company” has been created and consists of past and present actors and technical theatre personnel of the highest caliber. It has garnered many awards and honors. American College The Theatre Festival award-winning shows include *Blood Wedding*, *Steambath*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, and many others.

The acting curriculum features several levels of acting classes including improvisation, audition and cold reading, acting styles, acting Shakespeare, movement, voice and articulation, production, and stage direction.

Students have the opportunity to write and produce their own plays. The program is particularly committed to the exploration of original works as a celebration of self-expression. Technical theater options offered include stagecraft, sound and lighting, costuming, theatrical makeup and back-stage production.

Teamwork is promoted naturally as producers, directors, actors, and technical practitioners create theater forms. Festivals, performances, projects, and class presentations provide students the opportunity to perform and experience the critique process – all based on a common understanding of specific evaluative standards.

The program was founded by Dr. P.J. Van Niel in September of 1972, bringing to the stage more than 10,000 students celebrating the multicultural and diverse nature of the world that can be revealed through theatre. Dr. Van Niel continues as director, with Timothy Stewart as technical director.

There is a tradition of striving to promote individual and cultural esteem and appreciation in our pluralistic society through the study of theater works from past and present world cultures.

The program fosters a strong tradition of identifying the relationship between poetry and drama, and has presented numerous staged poetry shows featuring traditional and original works. Van Niel and Stewart are published poets and often perform, as well as present their original work.

Career Opportunities in Theatre

The Compton Center Theatre program offers training to develop skills in the following careers:

- Actor
- Agent
- Announcer
- Casting Director
- Costume Designer
- Critic
- Director
- Drama Coach
- Entertainment Lighting and Design
- Narrator
- Playwright
- Producer
- Prop Manager
- Rigger
- Scene Painter
- Set Design and Construction
- Stage Manager
- Talent Scout
- Theatre Arts Instructor
- Theatre Manager